

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SSC-01

OMB-01 DOTE-00 EB-07 COME-00 OES-06 LAB-04 /088 W

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R 140952Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5422

UNCLAS LONDON 14424

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELTN, UK

SUBJECT: UK REESTABLISHES SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND NAMES WILLIAM RODGERS AS NEW MINISTER

SUMMARY: IN THE RECENT CABINET REORGANIZATION PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN REMOVED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND ESTABLISHED A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT. MR. JOHN GILBERT, PRESENT MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, WAS MOVED TO DEFENSE, AND MR. WILLIAM RODGERS WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT. THE NEW DEPARTMENT WILL ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOMESTIC TRANSPORT POLICY PREVIOUSLY EXERCISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.
END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER LLAGHAN ESTABLISHED A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT TO DEAL WITH THE TRANSPORT POLICY MATTERS PREVIOUSLY HANDLED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT. THE MOVE APPEARS TO GIVE MORE PROMINENCE TO THE FORMULATION OF A DOMESTIC TRANSPORT POLICY IN VIEW OF THE CONFLICTING VIEWS OF ROAD AND RAIL TRANSPORT GROUPS. A RECENT GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT, A SO-CALLED ORANGE REPORT, HAS INTENSIFIED DISCUSSION OF THE DIRECTION BRITISH DOMESTIC TRANSPORT POLICY SHOULD TAKE. UNIONS AND OTHER TRANSPORT INTERESTS, INCLUDING THE UK
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AUTOMOBILE PRESS ASSOCIATION HAVE WELCOMED THE MOVE AS

AFFORDING THEM A STRONGER VOICE IN THE GOVERNMENT. PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE, HOWEVER, NOTED THAT THE MOVE MAY RETARD THE INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORT, HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL LAND USE PLANNING WHICH THE MERGER OF TRANSPORT INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT WAS ON THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISHING.

2. THE NEW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT, MR. WILLIAM RODGERS, REPLACES MR. JOHN GILBERT WHO IS PRESENTLY ON A TRIP IN THE US AND IS MOVING TO DEFENSE. MR. RODGERS, 47 YEARS OF AGE, CAME INTO THE LABOR MOVEMENT THROUGH THE FABIAN SOCIETY OF WHICH HE WAS GENERAL SECRETARY FROM 1953-60. A STRONG SUPPORTER OF HUGH GAITSKELL, IN 1962 HE ENTERED COMMONS. IN 1964 HE WAS PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO GEORGE BROWN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HE THEN WENT TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND, IN 1968, WAS MADE MINISTER OF STATE AT THE BOARD OF TRADE. HE LATER WENT TO THE TREASURY UNDER ROY JENKINS AND WORKED WITH HIM IN SUPPORT OF BRITAIN'S ENTRY INTO THE COMMON MARKET. PRIME MINISTER WILSON APPOINTED HIM MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE IN 1974. MR. RODGERS / PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY WILL BE MR. JOHN HORAM, CHAIRMAN AND PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC POLICY MEMBER OF THE CENTER RIGHT MANIFESTO GROUP OF LABOR MP'S. HIS APPOINTMENT WILL REQUIRE HIM TO LEAVE THE MANIFESTO GROUP.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRANSPORTATION, ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON14424
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760346-0344
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760963/aaaacbvo.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vandyklc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 FEB 2004 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <26 AUG 2004 by vandyklc>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UK REESTABLISHES SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANS- PORT AND NAMES WILLIAM RODGERS AS NEW MINISTER SUMMARY:
IN THE RECENT CABINET REORGANIZATION PRI
TAGS: ELTN, UK, (RODGERS, WILLIAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006